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Pace's Picante Sauce (Medium)

Texan David Pace had been selling 58 different varieties of jam, jellies, and sauces from the back of his liquor store in the 1940s when he came up with a recipe for a thick and spicy tomato-based sauce he dubbed "Picante." When sales of David's new sauce took off, he concentrated all his efforts on marketing his all-natural, preservative-free product, and designed the sauce's famous hourglass-shaped jar (to keep it from tipping over). Now America's number one Mexican hot sauce brand, Pace Foods, makes it known that it still uses only fresh jalapeño peppers in the sauces, rather than the brined, less

flavorful jalapeños - like those canned nacho slices. Each year all the fresh jalapeños used by the company weigh in at around 30 million pounds, and the nation gobbles up around 120 million pounds of the zingy sauces. Here's a simple recipe to make a kitchen copy of the medium heat-level Pace Picante Sauce, which was the first variety David created. The mild and hot versions were added in 1981, and you'll find clones for those at the bottom of the recipe in Tidbits.

1 10.75-ounce can tomato puree 1 can
full of water (1 1/3 cups) 1/3 cup
chopped Spanish onion 1/4 cup chopped
fresh jalapeño peppers, with seeds (3 to

4 peppers) 2 tablespoons white vinegar
rounded 1/4 teaspoon salt 1/4 teaspoon
dried minced onion 1/4 teaspoon dried
minced garlic

1. Combine all ingredients in a saucepan over medium high heat. 2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes or until thick. 3. When cool, bottle in 16-ounce jar and refrigerate overnight. Makes 2 cups (16 oz.).

Tidbits For the mild version of the salsa, reduce the amount of fresh jalapeños to 2 rounded tablespoons (2 to 3 peppers). For the hot variety, increase the amount of jalapeños to 1/3 cup (4 to 5 peppers).